

Whether the book is set in Michigan or the author is from Michigan, the Great Lakes State has wonderful teen stories. You can spend time in a big city like Flint or Detroit, in the suburbs or the country, sharing the vibrant worlds of these characters. You can see Michigan full of life in our frontier past or our urban and small-town present. Come see Michigan through its stories!

***Band Geek Love* by Josie Bloss** – The marching band is Winslow High School senior Ellie Snow’s all-consuming passion. It’s all band, all the time until Connor Higgins shows up and she finds herself in a secret romance with the handsome sophomore. Ellie isn’t ready to tell her friends, but then she discovers the flipside of secrets and how it feels to be shut out by the ones she loves.

***Cheating Lessons* by Nan Willard Cappel** – Bernadette is thrilled that her Wickham, Michigan, school’s “classic bowl team” is going to the finals until she discovers that her favorite teacher and coach of the team may be cheating his way to their victory. Will Bernadette turn him in or keep quiet in order to savor a rich victory over a much wealthier and more skilled competing school?

***Bucking the Sarge* by Christopher Paul Curtis** – Fourteen-year-old Luther T. Farrel is tired of being trapped under the thumb of his mother, the “sarge,” and is appalled by the way she shadily runs her group homes and low-income housing. With the help of residents from the Happy Neighbor Group Home and his best friend Sparky, Luther has big plans to bust out of his hometown of Flint, and make it on his own as a famous philosopher.

***Jason and Kyra* by Dana Davidson** – Jason and Kyra are two Detroit high-schoolers who could not be more different. He is the popular, good-looking jock; she is the super-smart, sure-to-be valedictorian. But when a school project brings them together, they both discover there is more to one another than they ever thought.

***Played* by Dana Davidson** – Ian Striver wants to join his Detroit high school’s elite fraternity. He is challenged to make plain and unpopular Kylie fall for him. He is uncomfortable with this, but he charms her and asks her out. Kylie begins to care for him, but when his deception is revealed in front of the entire school, Ian has to come to terms with who he is trying to be.

****Who’s Jim Hines?* by Jean Alicia Elster** – In 1935 Detroit, Douglas Ford, Jr., a 12-year-old African American boy, helps his dad around the scrap wood yard. Doug’s father owns the Douglas Ford Wood Company. While working with his dad, Doug takes the opportunity to unravel the mystery of Jim Hines, who he always hears about but has never seen. In discovering Hines’s identity, Doug also learns much about the realities of racism in Depression-era Detroit.

***Willow Run* by Patricia Reilly Giff** – During World War II, 11-year-old Meggie and her parents move to Willow Run, Michigan, so her father can take a job in the B-24 bomber-building factory. In this new place, Meggie learns about different kinds of bravery from all of the people around her, as the community deals with the war and their family deals with her soldier brother going missing in action in Normandy.

***Chasing Tail Lights* by Patrick Jones** – Christy’s daddy used to say that when you feel lost, follow the tail lights of the truck in front of you, and they’ll get you somewhere safe. But Christy is always lost in Flint. Like lots of teens in her neighborhood, she’s dying to leave that dying city. But she looks in all the wrong places for that beacon of light, never realizing that unless she finds it within herself, she’ll only end up in a dead end.

***Cheated* by Patrick Jones** – Mick Salisbury spends a regular night in Flint, hanging out with his two best friends, but it ends with a deadly mistake. Mick is forced to make the ultimate choice to protect his friends or to save himself. He knows the difference between right and wrong, but he just can’t seem to figure out the right next move.

***Nailed* by Patrick Jones** – The nail that sticks out farthest gets hammered the hardest. Flint Southwestern High School is run by a cult: the jockarchy, and Bret Hendricks could never fit in. Bret doesn’t mind standing out from the crowd when he’s acting or singing in his band or with his funky girlfriend. But as loyalties change, his safe havens disappear and he learns that sometimes you just have to risk getting hammered in order to build a great future.

***Things Change* by Patrick Jones** – Johanna is smart, studious, self-conscious and shy, but decides to change her life by dating Paul. Paul is a senior, known for cracking jokes, who is determined to escape from his Michigan hometown filled with empty factories and broken dreams. As Johanna becomes increasingly involved with Paul and he turns violent, Johanna is alone as she tries to figure out what to do when her first love goes wrong and things change.

***Blood is Thicker* by Paul Langan and D.M. Blackwell** – In a sequel to *Until We Meet Again*, Hakeem Randall moves to Detroit due to his father’s illness. Far from Bluford High, Hakeem quickly finds himself in a world of trouble, and his family is at the center of it. To complicate matters, a new girl hopes to make him forget his former girlfriend, Darcy, forever.

****Knucklehead: Tall Tales & Mostly True Stories about Growing Up Scieszka* by Jon Scieszka** – How did Jon Scieszka get so funny? He grew up as one of six brothers with Catholic school, lots of comic books, lazy summers at the lake with time to kill, babysitting misadventures, TV shows and jokes told at family dinner. This autobiography of the troubles Scieszka and his brothers get into during their Flint boyhood is hilarious and hard to put down.

***Harry Sue by Sue Stauffacher** – With her mother in jail, Harry Sue begins to believe that her life is destined to be the same and waits for the day her actions will put her away. But after being befriended by a supportive art teacher, sensitive Harry Sue comes to realize that she is not like her mother and begins to desire more for her future than ever before.

***Sister to the Wolf by Maxine Trottier** – Cecile is living in Quebec in the early 1700s when she sees “an indien slave,” Lesharo, being branded by his master. She buys and frees him, but their paths become further intertwined when he accompanies Cecile and her father to Fort Detroit. The story braids Cecile and Lesharo’s story with the clash between Indians and white settlers in Michigan’s wilderness frontier.

***Summer of the War by Gloria Whelan** – In 1942, as her parents work in the war effort in Detroit, 14-year-old Belle and her siblings spend the summer on Michigan’s Turtle Island in Lake Huron with their grandparents. Then Belle’s 15-year-old cousin, Carrie, joins them. Carrie comes to the island from Paris, fleeing the war. The cosmopolitan Carrie is disdainful of the island’s simple lifestyle, and the family is unsettled by their strained relationships and the war in Europe.

A Crooked Kind of Perfect by Linda Urban – Winner of the 2008 Michigan Mitten award for best children’s book. Zoe longs to play concert piano in Carnegie Hall but starts out with an electric organ. Aware of the difference between her dreams and her reality, she forges ahead and faces the anxiety of entering a competition. In the end, she learns to find perfection in the most imperfect and unique situations, and she shines.

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